

"I ask no favor for my sex; I surrender not our claim to equality; all I ask of my brethren is that they will take their fair share of our rights and permit us to stand upright on the ground God has designed us to occupy."

# DISTAFF

"We may safely assert that the knowledge that men and women, even as they have been put on earth, without reference to what they might be, is essentially imperfect and uncertain and will always be so until human institutions have told us that they have to tell."

preview issue

the test of civilization is the estimate of woman

15¢

## "IT DOESN'T HURT TO TRY"

Note: When Brenda Davillier, a junior at LSUNO, wife of Lloyd Davillier, and mother of three children, decided to run for U. S. Senator in Louisiana this past fall, she found doors closing in her face "because I was a woman and because I was black". She filed the following personal account of her experiences with Distaff.

I suppose most people who run for U. S. senator plan ahead for years, laying out strategy and establishing contacts as well as trying to raise campaign funds. My recent attempt to do that, however, was so completely different that I still do not think of myself as a "politician" (one who compromises promises and promises anything). I had belonged to that class of people disgusted by political pollution who had even come to disbelieve in the value of voting. It was in a fit of absolute disbelief that I decided to run for office.

It all began with my severe disappointment at being disqualified for a state loan to continue my education at LSUNO. Most people have heard that there was an Educational Amendment passed in Congress in 1972. People were told that the purpose of that amendment was to provide funds for grants and loans to make it possible for more people to attend college in spite of the high cost of living and education. However, the State of Louisiana has a state loan established that permits a student whose parents' or combined income of husband and wife, if married, does not exceed \$15,000.00, to borrow money on the same type of terms as those of federal loans. The Educational Amendment of 1972 was interpreted by the U. S. Office of Education in Dallas, Texas to limit the ceiling of the income of a married couple to \$4,400.00 to be eligible for any state loan.

My husband is a bus driver for Public Service in New Orleans, and his income, although it is more than the \$4,400 eligibility ceiling for state loans, hardly covers the needs of us and our children, Lisa 10, Daniel 5 and John 4. I could not believe that I and many other people in my financial situation could be disqualified from receiving state loans.

It seemed impossible that the federal government could tell the states how they should determine the eligibility of recipients of state loans. Although the government was going to pay the interest and could determine how much of who could receive the federal interest benefits, the state alone has the right to determine who else should qualify for state loans without the interest benefits.

After being told that I would not be able to get another loan, I did not give up. Instead, I tried to find out exactly what was going on. It seemed that no one at the HEW office here and no one in the State Dept. of Education knew or had a copy of the amendments or who had made that ruling about it. I was finally able to track down the origin of the ruling through the U. S. Attorney's Office here in N. O., but I still have not been able to get a copy of the amendments. I wanted to, and was going to file suit against the government.

I wanted to scream to the people, "You don't know what's going on!" But nothing at all appeared in the newspapers or on the television about this very serious situation. I had looked in the Constitution to see exactly what amendment guarantees

to the states those rights not expressly designated to some other authority and I glanced past the age and residence requirements to qualify for Congress. It was then that I realized that I was qualified, according to the Constitution, to run for U. S. Senator.

It occurred to me that if I would run for a public office, I would be in a position to shout to the people about what was going on as I so strongly desired to do. It seems to me that the federal government is insidiously creeping into every facet of our lives determining even how much money we will be allowed to earn. I realized that the people who run for office (especially Congress where the major laws are enacted) usually have some type of vested interest in maintaining the status quo and denying a fuller participation by the average worker in the governing of this country on all levels. If a campaign is funded by big business and a candidate wishes to receive similar funds in his next campaign, he must, of necessity, protect the interests of his contributor. Due to the extravagantly high cost of running an effective campaign, a candidate must be rich already or be backed by the wealthy.

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DR. BENJAMIN SPOCK, People's Party candidate for President of the United States, greets MRS. BRENDA DAVILLIER, seeking signatures to place her name on the ballot for U.S. senator. In background is JOHN HAAG of the People's Party.